

(2) 3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 including controlling the rate of travel of the conveyor such that said at least one setter and said unfired ceramic core are heated to said [superambient] elevated temperature when they are located proximate an exit opening of the heating oven.

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4. (Cancelled) /

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(3) 5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [4] 1 wherein said at least one setter supplies heat to said unfired ceramic core after [exiting] removal from the heating oven and during cooling to ambient temperature.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said unfired ceramic core conforms to a surface of said at least one setter by being heated to said [superambient] elevated temperature.

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7. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said unfired ceramic core is placed between a top setter and a bottom setter and is conveyed through the heating oven between the top setter and bottom setter.

8. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said unfired ceramic core includes an airfoil region.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the binder comprises a thermosetting binder.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the binder comprises a thermoplastic binder.

cy 11. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a ceramic core after molding and before firing for use in casting molten metallic material, comprising a) heating an unfired ceramic core having a molded core shape and having an organic binder on at least one setter in a heating oven to an elevated [superambient] temperature at or above a softening temperature of said binder effective to soften said binder to reduce distortion of said unfired ceramic core and b) removing said at least one setter and said unfired ceramic core having softened organic binder from said oven to cool to ambient temperature.

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12. (Previously Added) The method of claim 11 wherein the said unfired ceramic core includes an airfoil region.